

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594 | CANBERRA ACT 2601

18 May 2026

Dear personnel at the Office for the Arts,

I am an author of children's novels, with a special interest in historical fiction. In 2025, I published my first novel; my second will be published later this month. It has taken nearly 20 years of dedicated practice, sacrifice, and a significant financial investment in my education and creative development to have reached this milestone. I intend to continue developing my skills as a novelist so that I can work towards a long-term sustainable career producing high quality books for young readers. I feel honoured to play a small role in fostering a childhood love of books, supporting literacy development and – perhaps most importantly – helping children develop empathy through reading.

While I have been fortunate to receive two Copyright Agency funded Australian Society of Authors mentorships to support my creative development and have also been awarded a studio space at Vacluse House via Museums of History NSW, the greatest barrier I face is financial. As a freelance editor, I have lost significant work opportunities because of AI. Editors are also routinely underpaid – sometimes I would make more money stacking supermarket shelves than I do editing manuscripts. This financial strain means I routinely take on more and more projects – often working six days a week – just to make ends meet. I would rather spend some of this time writing, even though the financial rewards of being published do not reflect the investment of time, effort and expertise.

I am grateful for the initiatives introduced in *Revive* to assist with the sustainability of author and illustrator careers. However, since the introduction of *Revive*, authors have been facing increasingly precarious conditions. These conditions are exacerbated for those of us working as sole traders. Without immediate support, we risk the viability of the book industry in Australia.

I am calling for:

- Direct investment in authors and illustrators via multi-year fellowships supporting mid-career authors by providing them with time to write; seed money for emerging writers; a top up to the Lending Rights budget; a basic income pilot, involving 300 authors.

- Solutions to the unprecedented theft of Australian authors' work by multinational tech companies operating within Australia: transparency on copyright inputs for, and outputs from, generative AI models; research into the impact of generative AI on creative careers and Australian cultural output; structural solutions to bring multinational AI companies to the licensing table with Australian rightsholders.
- Tax reform to support author careers including tax-free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.
- Adequate resourcing for Writing Australia to deliver: increased coordination between federal and state funding; the commissioning of critically-needed research to provide baseline data from which to measure impact for the book industry; express guarantees included in every funding grant, ensuring that authors and illustrators engaged in funded projects will be paid at or above the ASA recommended rate, and that generative AI will not be used to replace or diminish the role of human creators in government-funded projects; coordination of a book-to-screen pipeline.
- Investment in First Nations-led writing and publishing.
- Commitment to educational interventions that support Australian authors and writing careers: nationwide authors-in-schools program funded out of education budgets; reversal of the failed Job-Ready Graduates program.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support its submission.

Yours sincerely,

Lucie Stevens
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